BACK TO THE OLD COUNTRY

STRIKING ANTHRACITE MINERS RETURNING TO THEIR NATIVE LANDS.

Their Savings Will Give Them "Position" Among Their Old Neighbors—Ways of Living.

Wilkesbarre Letter in Philadelphia Press.

The migratory money-earner from southwestern Europe has, since the commencement of the anthracite strike, left the region in large numbers and there are many who believe the region is well rid of him. Close estimates are that some 45,000 of the mine workers have already gone to other fields and that 28,000 of these were Slavs, Lithuanians and Italians, with a few Poles and fewer Hungarians.

The Slav and the Lithuanian, of the class which comprises the mine workers, are not, as a rule, good citizens; in fact, are not citizens at all. They come here for the money they can earn, spurred by the ambition of going back to the old country and living happily ever afterward.

There is another reason why the English-speaking miner is glad this class may not come back. It is certain that when the strike is over the operators will not employ as many men as they did formerly. Their plan will be fewer men and steadier work. Instead of working two-thirds time, with 150,000 men, they may work full time with 100,000 men and accomplish just as much. With the 28,000 or more of the Lithuanians and Slavs transplanted in other fields there will be greater opportunity for the "white men" remaining.

The "foreigners," as the Slavs and Lithuanians are generally called, are to be distinguished from the Poles and the Hungarians. The Poles come here to an adopted country and make good citizens. So do the Huns. But while many of the Poles remain in the mines and make intelligent miners, the Huns gradually drift away, and now there are few of them working in the mines. Most of them have opened stores or saloons, or taken up some other form of work less risky and more remunerative than coal mining.

Nothing so annoys a Polish or Hungarian priest as to have a fracas called by loose-penned papers "Another Hungarian (or Polish) Fight." They invade the offices indignant.

"These are good citizens, my people," they declare. "They are not these others, bah, no. They obey the law, they are good."

And so they are. In the same class with them belong the Russians, who, though not so numerous, are equally well behaved, solid, substantial, thrifty citizens. Father Toth, of the Russian Orthodox Church, of this city, has a congregation of 1,500 souls, and in the long term of his pastorate only two of that number were arrested, and then because they were watching a fight. He naively remarks: "The police got there before I did."

BECOME "LANDED PROPRIETORS."

It is the Slav and the Lithuanian who are the undesirable residents, although be it known there are many good citizens among them, too. The majority come here because they can make ten times as much money in the mines as they can on the farms where they worked in the old country. They can in five or six years save $600 to $1,000, which means that when they return to their native heath they can, in conjunction with one or two others, purchase a farm and a horse and be "landed proprietors" of wealth.

As a class they are thrifty and frugal and live for less cost than any other class of workers in this country. It is the custom when one of them marries here to start a boarding house, the wife being the mistress and cook. Space to sleep and a portion of the cooking pot is rented to the lodgers, each of whom buys his own food, flour and meat chiefly, for the boarding mistress to cook. Of course, a man with a small appetite has an advantage over a man with a large one, the dyspeptic gains, the gourmand loses.

The foreigner is apt at getting his money's worth. There is a story current among shopmen who have this class of trade that a foreigner with a number six foot will buy a number eleven boot to get all the leather he can for the price, and this illustrates a characteristic of these workers. They are hard bargainers. They will fight over a penny as a dog struggles with a bone. They will leave the store and return and return again until it has grown to be the custom with the shrewd storekeepers to make a foreign price and allow it to be beaten down until it stops at a good profit.

HOUSES BUT NOT HOMES.

The homes of these foreigners seldom deserve the name. Little furniture and plenty of space is the requirement. The more space the more lodgers. Most of the lodging houses have bunks, many but boards over which straw and a blanket are spread, and there, some half dozen or more in a room of ordinary size, sleep these toilers of the mine, while at a big table in the kitchen they gather to eat.

These are characteristics of the class that comes here to earn enough to go home with. The others, those who come here to live and stay, have comfortable homes. Some of the earnings are expended for the comforts of life, they take an interest in the politics of the county, they know its institutions, they respect the law.

The "drifters" do neither. To them the law is ugly because it locks them up in jail and some one else may run off with the trunk and what money it has. The law they recognize the right for fill up with polinky and use pistol, knife and club to express their enjoyment of the inevitable fight. In some parts of the region the pay day night fights are as regular as pay day itself. If the law inquires too closely into the facts of a fight or a man injured or one dead it is easy to say, "Me no know," and easier to look it, and in these inscrutable, baffling three words the foreigner frequently takes refuge.

Polinky holds the prize in this part of the country as a fight-producing drink. It is made of whisky and beer. A sextel or quarter of beer poured into a washtub or boiler, and a gallon of whisky mixed with it, a little red pepper to flavor and bite, and there you are. It takes an iron throat to swallow it, and an iron head to hold its fumes. Its chief effect is a drunkenness that has no memory and an insatiable desire to fight, anything or anybody.

They have great respect for a uniform, and a dozen or more, polinky-mad, willing to fight a score, will flee at the sight of a blue-coat and buttons. During the exciting times following the Lattimer shooting, when the coal region about Hazleton was under martial law, an officer of the City Troop, of Philadelphia, was complimented for his hardihood in riding into a section of the country where hundreds of the supposedly bloodthirsty foreigners were.

"It isn't daring on the part of my men or me," he said, and the next time he rode among them he showed why.

A crowd of a hundred or more, each with a revolver in a ready pocket, were marching along the road near Honeybrook as the lieutenant and the six troopers approached. At the first glimpse of the uniforms, the swords, and the carbine the men drew to one side of the road, sullen, revengeful but, as the little troop trotted past, there was an involuntary straightening of bent backs and drooping shoulders, heels were brought together, and arms were prevented, only by an effort, from giving the military salute.

FIGURE AT THREE PER CENT.

The frugal and the saving among these people are learning not to place their faith and their money in trunks and a crowded lodging house, and are willing to part with it in exchange for a little book through the brass barred window of a bank counter. And they know the value of 3 per cent., and figure it carefully in many odd and incomprehensible ways, so that when the time comes for their return to the old country they can have it all at command. They come by steerage and go by steerage, having learned little but a choice collection of swear words, enough English to express their ignorance, and an ambition to lord it over those among whom they go to live. With them goes the story of the land of gold, and the story spreads as stories will, so that year by year the tide of immigration from these countries rises.

There is a charmed word in the heart of Lithuania and the lands of the Slav. It is whispered in valley and mountain: the children know it when fathers depart, old mothers crying good-bye to strapping young sons know it; wives with husbands far away over the sea whisper it in their dreams; the railroad and the steamship agents smile when they hear it. It represents a fairy land, a golden argosy, a dream of power. It is "Wilkesbarre."

"Wilkesbarre" is often all the newly-landed immigrant can say in English. He has brought it with him from the far steppes of Russia, from the great plains of Hungary, from the shores washed by the muddy water of the blue Danube, and at each station, each dock en route, when confusion reigns and direction is lost and inquiry is breathless, he has answered "Wilkesbarre," and gone on his way directed. It is the Mecca of his desire. And years afterward, sitting on a little farmhouse on a rugged hillside in that far-off country, a hoary farmer with telltale blue powder marks on his hands and face may say reminiscently: "Wilkesbarre?" and then mumbling the little English left on his tongue say proudly with a wave of his hand at his crop-clad acres, "Oh, Wilkesbarre—me know, me know."

And so it is not strange that the English-speaking miner, the man who lives here and who intends to remain here, is not sorry to see this driftwood of old Europe swept onward to the West and to hope that it does not return. It will mean more work for him when work begins again; it will mean more for his sons and more money for the home.

A MAN OF MYSTERY.

Biographers Cannot Agree on Facts of Kitchener's Life.

Charles Mildmay, in Philadelphia North American.

"No attempt to describe Lord Kitchener," says the author of a recent biography of the great soldier, "appears to have been pre-eminently successful." To the mere layman, they certainly seem pre-eminently unsuccessful. When one has been brought up in the fond belief that what is in print is true, these biogarphies bring sheer consternation.

Please remember that I myself lay claim to no especial knowledge of Lord Kitchener. If I could get consistent accounts of himself and his family I should be quite satisfied, whether they were true or not. But every new biography of him that is published contains a lot of fresh facts, which are quite inconsistent with previous accounts.

For instance, on June 24 an evening paper published an article on the great general, stating that that day was his birthday. There seems at first sight nothing improbable in this statement. But, unfortunately, no man is allowed more than one birthday in the year, and a little while before another paper had said that he was born on June 15, 1850.

To decide the question you would naturally refer to the standard books of reference. "Who's Who" says vaguely that Lord Kitchener was born in 1850, and some of the "peerages" follow this example. Some, however, mention June and one July as the month of his birth. Two or three years ago the "Sketch" gave his birthday as June 15, and soon afterward published an article supported by a convincing wealth of detail, in which his birthday was again June 15. It seemed, then, that the only fact of which one could be sure was that he was born in 1850. Yet, on Sept. 17, 1898, "M. A. P." said that Lord Kitchener was born "forty-seven years ago."

To find out where he was born is even more difficult. The "Bijou Biography" and a number of other biographies tell us that he first saw the light at Crotter House, County Kerry. The "sketch" refers to his baptismal certificate and gives Gunsborough Villa, Ballybunion, as his birthplace. This statement recurs in many other "lives." An Irish paper, which might be expected to know the right spelling of an Irish name, speaks of Crotta House. And a correspondent of "M. A. P." who says that he was born close to the Kitcheners' abode, announces that Lord Kitchener was born at "Crotto" Cottage, at another house about two miles away. Finally, an American paper is responsible for the statement that he was born in a barrack.

The reason given for his having been born in Ireland is usually that his father's regiment was stationed there. As his father is variously stated to have been colonel of several different regiments at that time, this method of accounting for his presence in Ireland might be hard to confute were it not for the fact that Colonel Kitchener had left the army nearly three years before Lord Kitchener was born. At least that is what the official documents say. And, according to another authority, there is no place near Crotto House where any regiment could have been stationed. The Thirteenth Light Dragoons, the Twenty-fifth Regiment of Foot and the Ninth, some of the regiments of which Colonel Kitchener seems to have been in command simultaneously.

As to his nationality, newspaper controversy has raged long and acrimoniously. The Daily Chronicle, the Pall Mall, "M. A. P." and many others have asserted that he is an Irishman. Admittedly he was born in Ireland, but the truthful if uncomplimentary reply has been made that a cow born in a pig sty is not necessarily a pig. Some have gone so far as to say that his ancestors were Irish, but this honor Lord Kitchener has disclaimed, and has attended an East Anglian dinner as an East Anglian. The "Bijou Biography" says that his father's family came from Binstead, in Hampshire. The Times and other papers say that the family belonged to Cossington, in Leicestershire. The most general opinion is in favor of Lakenheath, in Suffolk.

His name, at any rate, is, it might be supposed, a matter easily to be ascertained. Yet, for some reason "Who's Who" has put his first Christian name, Horatio, in brackets. And an American paper persistently refers to him as "Ketchener."

There is a clear distinction in one matter between the American and English students of the Kitchener problems. Genealogies over here unite in saying that Horatio Herbert was the second son. But on the other side Lord Kitchener is nearly always introduced in biographies as the eldest son of Colonel Kitchener.

By the way, it may be mentioned in connection with Lord Kitchener's ancestry that at the time when he visited the city in triumph after the Egyptian campaign Truth dug up a beautiful little story. It was a most interesting coincidence, we read, that exactly a hundred years before an ancestor of Lord Kitchener, Captain E. Berry, had received the same honor on bringing back the news of the battle of Alexandria. The coincidence would have been more interesting if Lord Kitchener had any ancestor named Berry; but no such name occurs in his genealogy. And it was afterwards denied that the news was brought from Alexandria by any one of that name.

The actual events of Lord Kitchener's life are wrapt in as much mystery as his birth and antecedents. The Sketch has told us that he was educated at home—wherever that may have been. Other historians say that this young mind was trained abroad by private tutors from an early age. The Bijou Biography says: "It has been stated" that he was at Harrow, but does not add any opinion as to the truth of the story. A weekly society paper, however, went much further, giving stories of his school days and telling what young Kitchener said to Dr. Butler, the head master, and what the head master said to Kitchener. After one's previous experience it is no surprise to read in the Review of Reviews that "Lord Kitchener was not a public school boy."

Then another story which has had a great vogue tells us that he fought for France as a slunter in the Franco-German war. "Finding his commission in the royal engineers too peaceful," wrote "M. A. P.," "he fought as a volunteer against the Prussians with General Chanzy's army of the Loire." But he did not get his commission in the engineers until 1871, after recovering from an illness which most chroniclers tell us was contracted in a war balloon in the Franco-German war. The Daily Chronicle alleges that he was twice wounded in that war. "The flying bullets found other billets than his breast." ("Bijou Biography.") Does this mean that he was wounded in the leg or the arm?

Audi alteram partem. The Review of Reviews asserts that his first fight was in Egypt when he was Governor of Suakin. An evening paper stigmatized the Franco-German story as ridiculous, and Mr. Charles Low, M. A., in this Queen, while explaining why Kitchener might have fought for France, says that he did not.

After all this, could anyone believe that he had fought in the Franco-German war? Yes; Mrs. Kitchener, his mother, did, and told an interviewer that it was quite true.

There are many other things which I should like to find out about Lord Kitchener. But I have not the courage to pursue the quest. I turn with relief to the simplicity of the Homeric question.

ICE MINES IN ARIZONA.

They Promise Good Returns to the Men Who Are to Work Them.

Philadelphia Inquirer.

Nowhere in the world does there exist an industry so unique as that just being put in operation in northern Arizona, where elaborate plans are being laid to utilize the product of the ice caves in existence there. Strange, it seems, too, that in this land of great heat, where in some places ice is a priceless luxury, made so by excessive freight rates which prevail in the Territories, man's ingenuity has not heretofore conceived the idea of the wholesale appropriation of the relief which nature has provided.

Not until very recently has any attempt been made to take away the apparently inexhaustible quantities of ice which have been found in the caves near Flagstaff. Now, however, it is intended to literally mine or quarry the ice, and the promoters of the scheme declare it will prove a great profit producer from the very outset, as they expect to secure ice enough not only to supply the needs of smaller stations, towns and lumber camps in that vicinity, but to provide a supply for the railroads of northern Arizona and New Mexico, even into California, as in the vast region of what was once the northern part of the Great American desert ice factories have not as yet become common. Indeed, the factories at Los Angeles, Phoenix, Albuquerque and Las Vegas have for years supplied most of that district with ice, although at prices that necessarily were prohibitive, made so by the long railway haul.

The main or best known ice cave lies at the head of Clark's valley, seventeen miles southwest of Flagstaff. Although others may be larger, they are not so accessible. A wagon road leads nearby to the cave, and the Arizona Lumber Company's railroad at one time passed near, but that has been changed since. The people of the country think the cave was originally what is termed a "blow-out"—that is, a volcano vent made by water or gas, during some convulsion of nature, in the early history of our planet. There are many of these "blow-outs" of various sizes and extents scattered over Arizona.

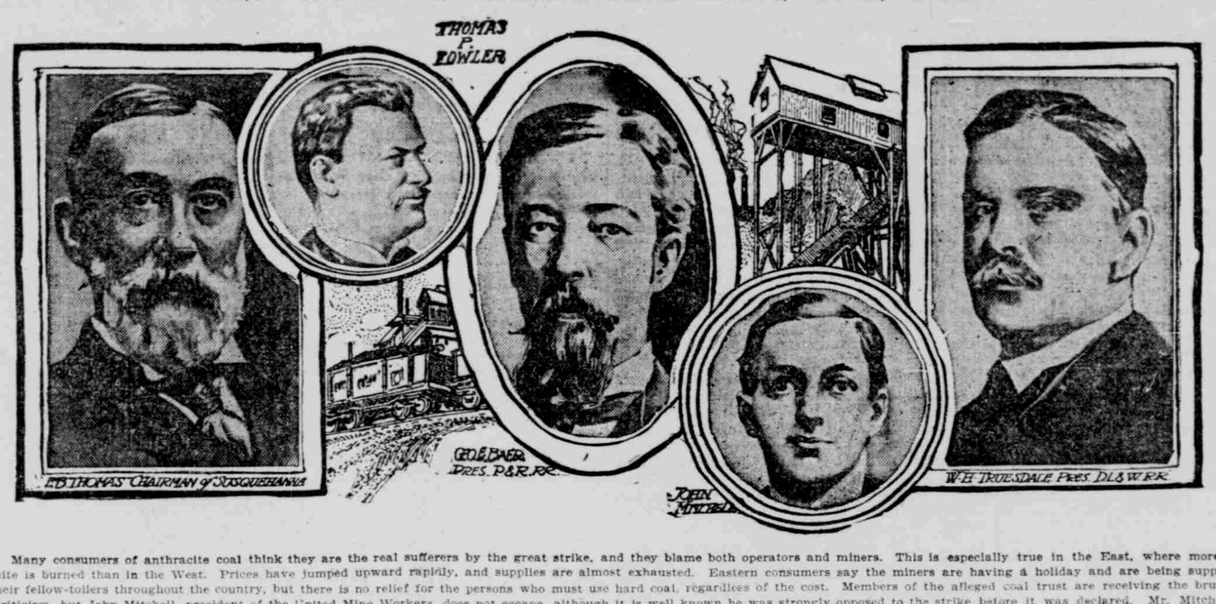
Until last August the main cave had only been penetrated to a depth of 200 feet, and even that distance could only be reached by the possessors of small bodies. At that time E. R. Dulton, a young man from New York, succeeded in creeping and crawling through the narrow crevice at the 200-foot point and over 100 feet further he found the cavity gradually widening until it grew into a cavern much larger that that near the surface. He found several smaller caves leading out of the large one, all in almost solid ice, and he believes that they lead far into the earth.

DIFFERENT SORT OF MATCHMAKERS.

He—In one part of Switzerland there are more than three thousand girls constantly engaged in making matches.

She—There are more than twenty times that number of mothers over here doing the same thing.

MEN WHO ARE MAKING ANTHRACITE COAL DEAR.



Many consumers of anthracite coal think they are the real sufferers by the great strike, and they blame both operators and miners. This is especially true in the East, where more anthracite is burned than in the West. Prices have jumped upward rapidly, and supplies are almost exhausted. Eastern consumers say the miners are having a holiday and are being supported by their fellow-toilers throughout the country, but there is no relief for the persons who must use hard coal, regardless of the cost. Members of the alleged coal trust are receiving the brunt of the criticism, but John Mitchell, president of the United Mine Workers, does not escape, although it is well known he was strongly opposed to the strike before it was declared. Mr. Mitchell is said to be merely carrying out the wishes of the miners, whose servant he is. Much in the same sense President Baer, of the Philadelphia & Reading Railway, who is reported to be directing the strike for the operators, is simply obeying the dicates of the majority. Some of his lieutenants are Messrs. Truesdale, of the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western Railway; Fowler, of the New York, Ontario & Western, and E. B. Thomas.

HISTORIC WHITE HOUSE

IT IS NO LONGER THE EXECUTIVE MANSION OF THE GOVERNMENT.

First Time Since the British Invasion that the Building Has Been Deserted by a President.

Washington Letter in St. Louis Republic.

For the first time, with one exception, since President John Adams entered it over a century ago, all executive business is being conducted outside of the White House. On occasions almost without number Presidents and their families have been absent from the executive mansion for various lengths of time, but, with the notable exception of the British invasion of the capital, the occupancy of the house in Jackson place by President Roosevelt and the entire executive force is the first instance where no part of the administrative machinery was in operation in the presidential residence since its establishment.

The nearest approach to the present condition was during the first few months of the administration of President Chester A. Arthur. Following his induction into office on the death of the assassinated Garfield in the fall of 1881 and until Jan. 1, 1882, when Arthur held his first public reception in the White House, General Arthur made his home at the residence of Senator Jones, of Nevada. This residence is, perhaps, better known as the Ben Butler house, from the fact that it had been built and owned by the statesman from Massachusetts.

With the President in the Jones home were his private secretary and a small office force, and it was here that his first message to Congress was written. At the White House, however, not an inconsiderable amount of official business was transacted, the late Maj. O. L. Pruden being, as executive clerk, practically in charge of the official force there.

During the residence of President Arthur in "the gray house on the hill," as the Butler house was called, the White House underwent extensive repairs and a complete renovation. This work was begun shortly before the shooting of President Garfield, and was carried forward during the summer and fall. With General Garfield at Elberon during the months subsequent to the shooting was his private secretary, J. Stanley Brown, but the remainder of the force was at work in the executive mansion.

President Hayes occupied for a time a house near the Soldiers' Home and President Cleveland spent much time at "Red Top" and at Buzzard's Bay, but the executive machinery remained in each case in the presidential residence.

During President McKinley's first term he and Mrs. McKinley and part of the office staff spent a portion of several summers in the cottage home of the McKinleys in Canton, but the bulk of the administration routine business was disposed of in the White House.

President and Mrs. Harrison were absent from the presidential mansion for several somewhat prolonged periods, but the official business went on in the White House during their absence.

GRANT'S ABSENCE.

The absence of Presidents of the United States from the official home of the chief executive was the subject of one presidential message to Congress. Near the close of the second term of General Grant as President the matter of his frequent absences from the White House was brought up in the House of Representatives and developed heated discussions. The great chieftian, who, as in the civil war, never rested until he had seen the matter, whatever it was, settled, at once had prepared a message which showed from the beginning of the national government, the respective absences and the duration thereof of Presidents from the seat of government, and by the list it was shown that in the number and in the aggregate length of time away from the White House Grant's had been exceeded by a number of his predecessors. The matter was never again heard of again.

The Taylor mansion, better known as the "Octagon," because of its peculiar shape, at the corner of Eighteenth street and New York avenue, and later, the house at the northwest corner of Pennsylvania avenue and Nineteenth street, were seats of the administration function of the government following the burning of the White House in 1814, the executive mansion being repaired only in time for the entrance of Mr. Monroe, who succeeded President Madison March 4, 1817.

The burning of the White House by the British took place on the night of Aug. 24, 1814. The battle of Bladensburg had been fought, and the American forces, largely made up of raw militiamen, and pitted against 1,000 marines and 2,500 veterans who had seen service under Wellington, had suffered repulse and fallen back on Tennallytown. Flushed with victory, the British entered Washington, and in the White House, one historian states, they found a table set for forty guests, in expectation of the victorious return of the defenders of the city. This, however, is not borne out by facts and by the letter of Dolly Madison of that time and of that very day. These letters show that she and Mr. Madison, who was at Bladensburg during the first half of the battle, were fearful of the outcome. The soldiers found food and drink there in quantity, however, and after regaling themselves and pillaging the mansion the torch was applied. Only the walls were left standing.

The battle of Bladensburg, where the American troops had hurried to meet the British, under General Ross and Admiral Cockburn, began at 1 o'clock and ended at 4. The British entered Washington about 8 p. m. In addition to the burning of the White House and the Capitol, including the Congressional Library, the treasury, the State, War and Navy departments, the house of General Washington, a hotel building of Mr. Carroll and other property was destroyed that night.

CROSSED THE POTOMAC.

For several days before the advent of the British carts loaded with public documents and private property were streaming across Long bridge into Virginia, the English in the meantime having sailed up the Patuxent river and landed at Benedict, thirty miles from Washington. The movement of valuables began on Sunday and was continued Monday and Tuesday, the day of the battle and the entry of the invaders. Mrs. Madison remained at the White House until the afternoon of the 24th, when about 3 o'clock James Smith, a colored servant, came riding in from Bladensburg calling out: "Clear out, clear out. General Armstrong has ordered a retreat." The day before Mrs. Madison had received a note from the President to be ready to enter her carriage at a moment's notice and leave the city. One carriage had been filled with official documents, and now getting into her own and accompanied by two servants she was driven rapidly to Georgetown Heights. With her she took the family plate and a painting of Washington, which was hastily torn from its frame.

The President and the members of his Cabinet, all of whom had left Bladensburg before the conclusion of the battle, on hearing of the disastrous result crossed the Potomac into Virginia at Little Falls, recrossing it at the Great Falls. Mrs. Madison spent the night of the 24th at Mrs. Lowe's, two miles beyond the Potomac. The next night she stopped at Mrs. Minor's, a few miles farther on.

During the several days spent away from Washington Mrs. Madison was joined by the President. Their reception at several places during their flight was in a number of caves far from hospitable, and some of their experiences were most unpleasant. One night was spent in a hut in a wood, and they were drenched in two rainstorms.

The British stayed but twenty-four hours in Washington, leaving on the night of the 25th. During that day much property was burned and otherwise destroyed by them. Having applied a torch to numerous buildings, it was thrown by the British into a dry well, in which the Americans had previously thrown large quantities of gunpowder and other military stores. In the explosion which followed, nearly 100 British were killed and wounded. On the heels of this came a tornado, such as Washington has not known before nor since. Great damage was done. It is not unlikely that the explosion and the tornado had much to do with the British retreat, the disasters serving to prey upon their superstitious fears.

With the departure of the enemy, Mrs. Madison and the President and members of his Cabinet returned to the city. Mrs. Madison went to the home of her sister, Mrs. Cutts.

The Taylor house was then rented, and the executive office again established. Here President and Mrs. Madison lived about a year, afterwards removing to the house at the northwest corner of Pennsylvania avenue and Nineteenth street, which had previously been occupied by the Treasury Department.

It was to "The Octagon" that the news of peace came six months after the flight from the White House, and it was there that the treaty of Ghent was considered by the President and his Cabinet, and signed on Dec. 24, 1814. The treaty was ratified by the Senate Feb. 18, 1815. During the occupancy of the building as the presidential residence, some of the most brilliant of state functions of those times were held.

The wanton destruction of the White House, the Capitol and other public buildings was before two weeks had passed avenged by the death of the British commanding general, the repulse of the English troops at Baltimore; their defeat at Plattsburg, and the surrender of their fleet on Lake Champlain. To the credit of the English, it may be said that the outrage was stigmatized in Parliament as "a great enterprise, which recorded in all the annals of war, which most exasperated the people and least weakened the government."

The cornerstone of the White House was laid Oct. 13, 1792, and when occupied by President John Adams upon his arrival in the capital, Nov. 1, 1800, was not quite completed. It was modeled after the palace of the Duke of Leinster, and after the fire was rebuilt upon plans furnished by Captain Hoban, the architect of the original building.

Physicians and Metaphysicians.

American Medicine.

When the long-needed historian of medical crankery in American shall begin to gather data for his gerat work we would have him note that all the antis are not "antis forever and ever, amen." There is the "metaphysician," for instance, who knows nothing whatever of metaphysics; knowing as little or less of pathology or therapeutics she (it is almost always she) will unhesitatingly offer to teach you "how to not merely cure disease in yourself, but how to find and remove the exciting cause of all forms of disease and suffering." This, together with the "Science of Being," will be taught by the editor of the Exodus, the official organ of the Exodus Society of Chicago. For a time the Science-of-Beingites will kindly allow us to keep open eyes to have medicines and medical institutions. With admirable benevolence and brilliant perspicuity the learned editor explains:

"Hospitals, sanatoriums, and retreats are blotches upon the fair face of a God-created humanity, but they must be thrown off from within through a change that destroys what nourishes them. An outcry against them, an effort to topple them in ruins, is misdirected energy. Were this accomplished, it would be a positive loss, for there are those that still need them. Viewed personally, man's fundamental endowments are sufficient to carry him triumphantly through all the complexities of existence. Complete and perfect in the beginning, he cannot be made more so by aught that pertains to matter and its phenomena."

THE RELIC HUNTER.

He Collects Loads of Souvenirs, but What Becomes of Them?

New Orleans Times-Democrat.

The contractors who are remodeling the White House at Washington have been compelled to secure an order from the authorities closing the grounds to visitors, who have been overrunning the premises and getting in the way of the workingmen. Usually the only visitors to a building under construction or in course of repair are small boys and girls who go after bits of firewood. But the White House is an historic building, and the people who have given trouble to the workingmen there have been well-dressed men and women in search of bits of rubbish for relics. Of all the forms of insanity this of collecting relics is the most commoun and the most inexplicable. Relics are gathered or bought and disappear. Some of the most valuable works of art in the world have been disfigured by these relic hunters for bits of masonry or metal or other material which absolutely disapear after they have been collected. What becomes of the tons and tons of relics that are collected yearly? Do the owners hide them and gloat over them as the miser gloats over his gold? The fact is that they disapear, though a mass of relics have been collected in the past century, and in every other century of the history of the world, sufficient to build a mountain range. It must be that they are thrown away by the collectors as a child throws away a toy after the novelty of its possession has worn off.

Not only are relics collected in enormous quantities, but they are manufactured in great numbers. A great many people of more or less honesty make their living and some of them make fortunes by the manufacture of relics. It is a business of no insiderable magnitude in this city alone. There is enough junk from the Confederate cruiser Alabama in this city to have sunk that heroic craft. There is tableware and cutlery saved from that vessel sufficient to supply the needs of an army corps, and one wonders what use the few hundred men had for so many table knives, and how did they manage to save them from a sinking vessel. These things will be sold in the course of time to people who have more money than they know what to do with, and they will disappear. But the purchaser of this sort of relic is a man of sound mind compared to the dangerous lunatic who will deface a statue to the danger of going to jail simply to secure a relic which will be thrown away the next day. Where are now the splinters of wood that were chipped from the blockhouse that crowned San Juan hill before the Americans drove the Spaniards from that height? There was a cord or so in this establishment a few years ago, brought hither by returning volunteers, but every strip has disappeared. The ammunition saved from the Spanish ships that were sunk off Sanitago bay has also disappeared. Does that disappearance indicate that the relic hunter has periods of sanity, or does it merely indicate that he has thrown aside his toys that he may have room for other relics?

Whatever the cause, the fact remains that relics have a very short life. The relics that were collected from the White House before the order was issued prohibiting admission to the public to the grounds will have gone the way of most other relics in the next few months. But the relic hunter will be with us always. He is perennial and irrepressible—sometimes a nuisance, sometimes a dangerous imbecile.

For Graduates to Consider.

Detroit Journal.

It's a rather picturesque little ceremony that young graduates indulge in these days—burning their text books. It is to be hoped that the young gentlemen know what they are burning—whether there isn't something in the books that they ought to keep, something that they haven't learned so thoroughly that they will not have to refer to it again. It will really be too bad if they realize some day that reference books are necessary to the most gigantic intellects—that the actual events of life will not always show the paths which those text books lay down in theory; that there are situations in life which might be elucidated with a rereading of certain passages in the books they so gleefully destroy to-day.

HE KNEW.

Katharine—Who wrote the poem entitled "Gladsome Summer Is the Only Time for Me?"

Kidder—The iceman.

IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM

ITS READING ROOM CALLED THE CASUAL WARD OF LITERATURE.

Its Most Regular Frequenters People Who Have Failed in Life and Find the Place a Refuge.

London Mail.

The British Museum reading room is in part the casual ward of literature.

Beneath the great dome, seated along the drab-colored, yet comfortable desks, one finds the most tragic failures in London.

Of course, all who dive into the unequaled wealth of our national collection are not among those who have missed their aim in life. The busy young journalist, the aspiring actor at the outset of his career, the prosperous bookmen, may all be found there. Yet the failures are so many that somehow they have set their stamp on the whole.

Smart dresses are few. Many of the women folk are arrayed in costumes that call back memories of the artistic crazes of a generation since. A goodly proportion of the men are plainly among the "might have beens."

The drowsy copyist and the eager "ghost," the "jackal" and the patient searcher, are familiar figures. The literary drudges who eke out a scanty living by looking up references, by writing odd paragraphs, and doing the hack work of a busy profession, here sink gradually on the downward slope amidst the pleasant companionship of multudinous books. Of good education, and possessing qualifications that are undeniable, they seem born to illustrate the trulsm that some are made for success, and that the lot of others must of necessity be failure.

Age haunts the room. Even the most casual reader cannot have failed to notice certain familiar white-haired figures, which are ever to be seen in the same places. Of those of to-day it would be ill fitting to speak. Their stories, after all, are but the same as those of similar venerable figures of yesterday, which have dropped out and are seen no more.

One old gentleman used to come day after day, carefully treasuring an umbrella coeval with Noah and the flood. We look for him now in vain. One sees no longer the careful old student who carried about with him a leather case full of manuscript. It matters not where he went, that case never left his hands, even if he only moved a few yards from his seat. When consulting the catalogue or some reference books on the shelves, the case was yet with him.

What was in it? Something on which a life of study had in all probability been spent, something of great value to the owner, but almost certainly worthless to any one else. For he was only one of many who, year after year, pursue some remote study under the dome, dreaming of the time to come when their study shall be completed, and when the people who now pass them by shall recall their names with honor and admiration. Alas! the study seldom is completed, and often enough, when it is, men think it of no value.

READING-ROOM NUISANCES.

The reading-room nuisance is a type that cannot be passed over, the man ever eager to beg or borrow from the first youngster he can buttonhole. It seems odd at first to find a man who is admittedly a premier authority on, say, Assyrian inscriptions, tremblingly hint that you should invite him for a glass of ale and a sandwich. One of the worst of these nuisances was an incorrigible old beggar student, who was in the habit of proffering readers a pinch of snuff from a neat little box. The unsuspecting stranger, enjoying the touch of old-world courtesy, would accept it, whereupon the other would say, in an aggrieved tone, "Why, you have emptied my box. I am hard up; give me a penny to refill." The man was well known to the museum authorities, but was tolerated for a long time. Finally he had to be excluded from the rooms.

Among the lady readers was a young woman of great charm and good education, who was said to possess unusual talent. Two passions fought for mastery in her. The one was fondness for literary research, the other the love of the open air. Gypsy blood ran in her veins, and roofs and walls seemed to stifle her. She would go to the reading room for a time, enduring the London atmosphere for the sake of the books she loved. Then the passion to be out in the open would seize her, and for weeks and weeks she would wander about streets and lanes till reduced to the most pitiable condition. She was not given to drink, and was of irreproachable personal character; but her mad restlessness impelled her ever to the vagrant life. Time after time her friends rescued her, clad her once again and started her afresh; but sooner or later the irresistible impulse to be away under the skies would conquer and she would vanish. Then she vanished for once and all.

TRAGEDIES OF LITERATURE.

Top rooms in Bloomsbury and Drury lane attics, in Camden-town and Kentish-town, could tell tragic stories, could they but speak, of the shabby women searchers who day by day come here soon after the stroke of 9 and stay till evening, hunting out facts and figures for others. Happy are they when they have the work to keep them busy. More often with most of them work is scanty and food is horribly short. They are educated women all, most of them of good family. Alone through death or misfortune, their lives represent the acme of enduring misery.

The men searchers are some of them almost as badly off as the women. An advertisement appeared not long ago in a literary paper offering the services of a double, first class, honorous university man for eight hours a day museum research for £1 a week. Too often these men searchers have been brought there through drink. There is one well-known public house not far from the museum gates where men who might have molded the destiny of our nation, once famous dons and university scholars, men who once promised to be the light of the bar, the church, and the medical schools, foregather in their shabby gentility to drink, and to drown thought in this world of dead hopes.

Strangely enough as it may seem to some the British Museum reading room is a favorite center of foreign political refugees. Anarchists whose names are feared in the police sections of half a dozen countries may be seen there day after day patiently working at their political studies. Frequently the first intimation our police have of the arrival of notorious Anarchists in this country is by seeing them enter the museum. They are quietly followed, and their addresses secured in this way, after which they are placed under surveillance.

A REFUGE FOR THE DESTITUTE.

Some Americans use the reading room, haunting the quarter where books on heraldry and genealogy are kept, eager to trace their descent on most fanciful grounds from some noble name. There are others again with fancy claims to great estates, who come there day by day, and week after week, going on sometimes to year after year, seeking by the widest research amongst musty tomes to discover the lost steps in the ladder of their descent from royal or great houses.

The museum authorities themselves exercise remarkable forbearance and kindness to these waifs and strays. He must be a very exacting man who can overstep the limits of their courteous helpfulness. But even they have been obliged in recent years to prevent the museum reading room being used as a place of refuge for the destitute. Some years ago this got to the point of scandal, and one witness before the royal commission that inquired into the matter testified, "I believe there are several persons in a state of imbecility who come to read in the British Museum. I remember there was one person who used to blow his nose very loudly every half hour. I inquired who he was and was informed he was a mad person sent there by his friends."

This is no longer permitted. Most of the people now are workers, even if they are poor workers.

There was one incursion which drove the museum authorities almost to despair. When the missing word craze was at its height genuine readers were dispossessed of their place by a host of lady searchers, who waited for the doors to be opened before 9 o'clock, and then rushed in to secure desks and dictionaries for the rest of the day. But stern measures had to be used to stop them. Even to-day some fair frequenters come along mainly to solve acrostic competitions.